

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of former Senator Leonard C. Dunavant.

WHEREAS, the members of the General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the death of one of its most respected members, former state Senator Leonard Dunavant; and

WHEREAS, for 26 years this man of integrity and impeccable moral character, served the people of Tennessee, putting aside personal concerns to further the cause of responsible government; and

WHEREAS, Senator Dunavant was born in Ripley, the son of Harvey M. and Chloris E. (Akin) Dunavant. He was educated in the Millington public school system, and attended Union University and Memphis State University; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the House of Representatives for three terms and a member of the Senate for twenty exemplary years, Leonard Dunavant distinguished himself on Capitol Hill as a man of great wisdom and compassion, earning the universal respect and admiration of his peers; and

WHEREAS, despite serving as a Republican in a Democratic-controlled Senate, Senator Dunavant earned bipartisan respect for his expertise in finance and service as Chairman of the Council on Pensions and Insurance where he zealously protected the retirement funds and benefits of state and local employees, and as Vice-Chairman of the Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee, where he was a voice of reason and a model for responsible spending and more equitable taxation; and

WHEREAS, his stewardship as Chairman of the Business Tax Committee was immensely successful, as an effective forum for investigating and then addressing through legislation, the inequities of Tennessee's tax system; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished career, Leonard Dunavant was fearless in his convictions and principles, favoring an income tax as a key element in tax reform in stating that if it came right down to it, he'd "rather be responsible than re-elected"; and

WHEREAS, Leonard Dunavant's fiscal expertise served him well in playing an invaluable role in resolving numerous fiscal crises in the area of Medicaid. Following his defeat in the 1992 Republican Primary, former Governor Ned McWherter turned to him as his choice to become the staff director of the Medicaid Reform Commission; and

WHEREAS, in tribute to this august man, Governor Don Sundquist offered condolences to the family of Leonard Dunavant upon learning of his death, describing Mr. Dunavant as an unselfish person in everything he did, and as a good friend of the people of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Governor John Wilder aptly described Senator Dunavant as "the epitome of what a legislator ought to be: committed, integrity, never a conflict that influenced him not to act in the best interests of Tennessee. He spoke the truth and stood on convictions. He said what shall be done, even in the face of public sentiment and pressure"; and

WHEREAS, Leonard Dunavant served his fellow citizens of Tennessee with diligence and efficiency that will not soon be duplicated. In the 1980's, he founded funding for new construction at State Technical Institute at Memphis. Just one day before Senator Dunavant's death, the University of Memphis announced that the plaza in front of the University's new \$27 million library will be named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Senator Dunavant evinced his faith as a lifelong member and director of the choir at First United Methodist Church in Millington for over 50 years, organizing and working at many other church activities as well; and

WHEREAS, Leonard Dunavant enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Deloris; their two daughters, Janene Pennel of Nashville and Suzanne Ripski of Cordova; one son, Leonard C. Dunavant, Jr., of Germantown; and six grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Senator Dunavant worked tirelessly in service of countless good works, not for profit, applause or acclaim, but rather for the satisfaction of knowing Tennessee is a better

place to live as a result of his efforts. His love and respect for the responsibilities and duties of his office will be long remembered by his colleagues and the many people whose lives he enriched; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of our treasured friend and former colleague, Senator Leonard Dunavant, remembering with admiration his strong character and many selfless contributions to the people of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Senator Dunavant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.